I must take a certain amount of the blame. If I’d been able to read them myself then I might not have put temptation in his path. As it was, I’d relied on Marko to translate all the relevant documents for me as we went along, and he simply told me it seems whatever I wanted to hear. His plot was easily laid. He’d forged everything.

‘Look, here,’ said the inspector, waving our building permit. ‘On the whole not a bad copy. But our friend made a stupid mistake a Freudian slip! Here, where it asks your nationality, instead of “Great Britain,”’ he put “Greater Serbia.” And besides, none of these documents were filed in any of the appropriate departments. We have no record of your being here at all! And colleagues in Kosovo and Albania tell me the same thing...’

‘I’m afraid,’ he said, looking around and shaking his head, ‘your lovely house...’

Before she left I asked Sonia if there might be some hope of our starting again; applying for retrospective planning permission and renewing our commitment to world peace. ‘You know where you can put your planning permission,’ she said, dismissively. ‘No wonder everyone calls you mental.’

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Bottle Orchestra

Tony White

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Krazow.

The landscape of the Bieszczady mountains is rich in mineral deposits. The forested hills are home to a variety of wildlife, including roe deer and red foxes. The area is a popular destination for hiking and birdwatching.

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A bottle orchestra is created by cutting up and remixing plastic bottles in order to create musical notes and beats. The sound is produced by the sound of the bottles being struck and moved against each other.

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Diffusion Generator
Kosovo and Albania tell me the same thing...'}
after another. Marko’s efforts, though invisible to the rest of the world, were to me as much of an achievement as the house itself and no less beautiful: at once a virtual paper palace made of wit and derring-do in face of seemingly intractable regulations, and a legal superstructure that was as integral to the stability and safety of our home as the mortar, say, or the rafters.

It was Mika who knocked on the door one afternoon and metaphorically at least brought the whole thing crashing down. The Montenegrin portion of the house was built on Mika’s farm. He’d been running, I could see that. And he was in a state of hysterical disbelief. He started apologising and babbling about ‘Madame Sonia’. Mika was better at speaking my language than I was his, but not much. Through a series of pantomime expressions and some painful acting, this much I was able to gather: He’d been walking the dogs over by the cemetery and there among the few dozen moulder tomb-stones was my wife, half-hidden by the shadows. He thought nothing of it until he realised that she was sitting astride a familiar protuberant stomach, albeit one that he was seeing at an unfamiliar angle.